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Catholic Studies at the University of St. Thomas

Don J. Briel

University of St. Thomas

The phenomenon of Catholic Studies cannot adequately be understood without a prior consideration of certain fundamental tensions that mark modern higher education as a whole. These broader tensions characterize Catholic universities in specific and important ways. One may hesitate to affirm Lammenais' judgment that Napoleon's creation of the modern French university was the most pernicious act of his reign, although he had no hesitation in insisting that Napoleon "raised this monstrous edifice as a monument of his hatred for future generations; it was as though he wanted to rob the human race even of hope" (as cited in Burleigh, 2005, p. 133). Nonetheless, in recent years many well-known academics and external critics have begun to question both the coherence and the relevance of the contemporary university. Several years ago, both in a widely publicized lecture delivered at Georgetown and later in a paper delivered before a meeting of scholars in Chicago, Cardinal George (1997, 1998) argued that a university without a unifying vision is merely a high-class trade school. He argued that many of the most important institutions of higher learning in the United States had moved far in this direction. In his account of the decline of American undergraduate education, the former dean of Harvard College, Harry Lewis (2006), agreed with this general assessment in arguing that although it is true that "old institutional structures survive," nonetheless, "many have lost their meaning. The curriculum is richer than ever, but it is no longer wrapped around any identifiable ideals" (p. xii).

Similarly, C. John Sommerville (2006) has argued that the modern university's resolute commitment to an ideological secularism, one which reduces the perennial human questions of meaning and ultimate concern to arbitrary private values, has produced a crisis not only of confidence but also of coherence. "If our universities are to become more than professional schools," Sommerville argues,

then rationalism needs to be in dialogue with other "traditions of inquiry." For the most important matters in life include such matters as hope, depression, trust, purpose, and wisdom. If secularism purges such concerns from the curriculum

for lack of a way to address them, the public may conclude that the football team really is the most important part of the university. But if they are taken up, we will find ourselves using terms that seem to belong in a religious discourse. We have dodged this issue by saying that true, good, just are all political, meaning that they can't be discussed but only voted on. But in fact they could be discussed, if our discussions were to recognize a dimension of ultimacy. (p. 22)

Several decades earlier Christopher Dawson (1961) had described the basic framework of modern culture as “unitary” for in such a culture, he argued,

there is little room for the concepts which are fundamental to the Catholic or Christian view—the supernatural, spiritual authority, God and the soul—in fact, the whole notion of the transcendent. So unless students can learn something of Christian culture as a whole—the world of Christian thought and the Christian way of life and the norms of the Christian community—they are placed in a position of cultural estrangement—the social inferiority of the ghetto without its old self-containedness and self-sufficiency. (pp. 146-147)

And so it was necessary, he insisted, that students have an integrated and comprehensive sense of Christian culture as a whole so that the Christian way of life could be seen “not as a number of isolated precepts imposed by ecclesiastical authority, but as a cosmos of spiritual relations embracing heaven and earth and uniting the order of social and moral life with the order of divine grace” (p. 150). But both modern culture and the modern university are far more modest in their commitments. As Lewis (2006) noted,

The university has lost, indeed has willingly surrendered, its moral authority to shape the souls of its students. Harvard wants students to be safe and to be healthy, but security and therapy are the limits of its ambitions. Harvard articulates no ideal of what it means to be a good person, as opposed to a well person. (pp. 159-160)

Clearly, to the degree that this is true, Harvard is far from unique in this shift to a more therapeutic approach to student life and formation.

Catholic Identity and Catholic Higher Education

We do well to escape the intellectual ghettos of the past, as James Heft described, but we should be more attentive to the new ghettos we often erect to replace them, and it is in this connection that I would like now to turn to

the development of Catholic Studies programs at American Catholic universities. It is sometimes argued that Catholic Studies marks a return to the ghetto of Catholic triumphalism and isolation, but I suspect that Dawson (1961) was ultimately right in arguing that many of the self-imposed ghettos of the contemporary academy pose a more dangerous isolation from the deepest human longings: for the transcendent, for spiritual authority, for God. It is surely the case that both the curricula and the animating vision of Catholic Studies programs vary widely. Some may well focus somewhat narrowly on a cultural studies model, but I suspect all of them to a greater or lesser degree developed out of a concern to recover this more integrated understanding of Catholic thought and culture that has in large measure been obscured in recent history.

Some have argued that the new emphasis on Catholic Studies within Catholic universities simply confirms the fundamental loss of a coherent Catholic identity for the university as a whole. However, I am not persuaded that this is the case. It had always been true that only a relatively small minority of faculty at Catholic institutions systematically engaged the complex intellectual search for a unity of knowledge arising out of a Catholic vision of reality. In the past, this task was largely exercised by the religious communities that founded and sustained these institutions, communities whose own wide-ranging interdisciplinary conversations established a framework and context for the university as a whole. We have not yet fully realized the larger implications of the decline in numbers and influence of these religious communities, the loss of which has left a significant vacuum within Catholic universities. It is perhaps inevitable that a now more voluntary and diverse community, largely composed of lay scholars committed to an ongoing interdisciplinary reflection on the integrity of Catholic life and thought, would continue to be a minority within the larger faculty of the university. Of course, these religious communities also held an administrative responsibility for the life of the university and so exercised authority over hiring and curriculum, but the fact remains that it has never been the case that the modern university as a whole had taken up this integrating task in a systematic way. If we hope to recover and renew this emphasis, we will need to create new institutional structures, forums for sustained conversation, new curricula, and an institutional willingness to hire faculty who have specific commitment and competence for this kind of broad, interdisciplinary reflection. I think that Catholic Studies reflects one significant approach to this larger goal.

Catholic Studies initiatives are essential to this renewal of Catholic higher education, I think, but before I turn to the positive value of Catholic Studies

programs for the vitality of Catholic intellectual life, let me list several things that Catholic Studies programs are not:

1. Catholic Studies programs are a necessary but insufficient response to the demands for the renewal of Catholic higher education.
2. Catholic Studies programs cannot substitute for strong programs in theology and philosophy. In fact, Catholic Studies programs both presuppose and depend upon the strength of these disciplines.
3. Catholic Studies programs do not imply a rejection of the importance of the study of other Christian traditions and other religions. Again, it presupposes the value of such studies.

From the point of view of the positive dimension of Catholic Studies for contemporary Catholic universities, I would stress the following contributions. Catholic higher education as a whole depends upon the creation of such programs that might remind the university of the comprehensiveness and integrity of the Catholic intellectual tradition at a time in which there is a tendency to view Catholic life and thought as a series of disconnected and arbitrary assertions and moral claims. It is in this sense that Pope John Paul II (1990) spoke of the necessity within the university to “work towards a higher synthesis of knowledge, in which alone lies the possibility of satisfying that thirst for truth which is profoundly inscribed on the heart of the human person” (p. 15). In order for this work to be achieved, he argued, there must be sustained attention to “interdisciplinary studies, assisted by a careful and thorough study of philosophy and theology” in order to “enable students to acquire an organic vision of reality and to develop a continuing desire for intellectual progress” (p. 18). It was in this sense that Newman (1982) had insisted that the university could not be content to become a mere caravanserai of ideas without any organizing principle, but rather would be required to assign to each study its “own proper place and own just boundaries” (p. 344). But the fact remains that there are few forums on our campuses for these interdisciplinary reflections on Catholic thought and culture. Without them it is inconceivable that sustained discussions of this kind could take place.

Catholic Studies programs can recover for students and faculty alike the integrity of the life of thought and prayer, of human and divine knowledge, and help to overcome the cultural and intellectual divides that separate faculty and academic departments from the work of campus ministry programs and service to the community and the Church. They also provide important reminders that the vital mission of Catholic higher education is not merely imposed upon our institutions by ecclesiastical mandate, but arises out of a deep,

comprehensive, and venerable Catholic humanist tradition. This distinctive tradition of Christian humanism was expressed with characteristic eloquence by Newman in an 1856 sermon in the University Church in Dublin in which he insisted that the task of the Church in relation to the university is to

reunite things which were in the beginning joined together by God and have been put asunder by man. Some persons will say that I am thinking of confining, distorting, and stunting the growth of the intellect by ecclesiastical supervision. I have no such thought. Nor have I any thought of a compromise, as if religion must give up something, and science something. I wish the intellect to range with the utmost freedom and religion to enjoy an equal freedom; but what I am stipulating for is that they should be found in one and the same place and exemplified in the same persons. I want to destroy that diversity of centers, which puts everything into confusion by creating a contrariety of influences. I wish the same spots and the same individuals to be at once oracles of philosophy and shrines of devotion. It will not satisfy me if religion is here and science is there, and young men converse with science all day and lodge with religion in the evening....I want the same roof to contain both the intellectual and the moral discipline....I want the intellectual layman to be religious and the devout ecclesiastic to be intellectual. (Newman, 1921, p. 13)

Intellectual Integration

The inevitable complexity of university programs and audiences that now characterizes most of contemporary higher education makes it increasingly unlikely, perhaps as some have argued, unthinkable, that the integration of the university and the college that Newman had proposed, the integration of ideas and the integrity of intellectual and moral formation of students, can be pursued systematically and organically by the faculty of the university as a whole. But as I argued earlier, the systematic exploration of these issues has never been seen to be a general expectation for faculty in the modern Catholic university. The larger integration was both promoted and modeled by the founding religious order, which was able to sustain a complex sense of a large integrity to which the personal efforts and scholarly commitments of other faculty, both Catholic and non-Catholic, contributed. I am persuaded that even a major implementation of new hiring for mission policies, which succeeded in bringing to our campuses a much larger number of faculty committed to a distinctive Catholic identity and mission, would not resolve this pressing need for integration. This task must be engaged by a relatively small number of faculty for whom this is the principal scholarly commitment and teaching expectation. To achieve this goal it will be necessary to move beyond

an academic program to a more comprehensive and complex academic center that would provide forums for interdisciplinary conversations and scholarly projects focusing on the integration of knowledge and the ultimate complementarity of faith and reason in Catholic thought.

This leads me once again to a consideration of the role of Catholic Studies. In recent years there have been a number of typologies proposed by which to differentiate various approaches taken by emerging Catholic Studies programs. These types or models have never struck me as particularly useful, since few of the programs fail to reflect many aspects of each of the various models proposed. Each of Hinsdale's (1999) four models reviewed in Dosen's article, for example, is reflected in the work of Catholic Studies at the University of St. Thomas in what we see to be their genuine tension and complementarity. It may be true that in the case of a campus in which a chair in Catholic Studies is devoted to the particular research interests of an individual scholar that one of these models is selectively emphasized, but I know of no successful program in the country that could be adequately described under their terms. Inevitably, Catholic Studies must engage the variety of cultures in which the Catholic Church has sought to express its deepest convictions and by which it has been shaped in that expression and so some aspect of a cultural studies approach is to be assumed. But that concern would not preclude a close consideration of the specific claims of the complex and comprehensive intellectual tradition of the faith. In fact, it presupposes it. Such a consideration could conceivably be undertaken without any apologetic aim, but such a study would be of little interest to the vast majority of students who seek to gain a deeper sense of the unity of knowledge and an understanding of the relation of faith and reason to be found in Catholicism. And finally, issues of formation, not only in our program but in most others, have been taken up in response both to student demand and to a recognized need to recover what the Land O'Lakes Statement referred to as the obligation to insure the full human and spiritual development of the student.

A Community of Scholars

One sometimes has the impression that Catholic Studies programs were the product of authority, whether ecclesiastical or academic. Although the support of St. Thomas's president and senior administrators was critical, the impetus for the country's first Catholic Studies program was entirely that of faculty. In preparation for a national conference on the prospects for Catholic colleges and universities in the twenty-first century, a group of faculty on our campus created a 5-year series of lectures and summer seminars exploring future challenges and opportunities for Catholic higher education. The

seminars, eventually begun in the summer of 1994, were led by external facilitators and were connected to a series of semiannual lectures in which a wide variety of Catholic and non-Catholic speakers explored the general idea of a Catholic university, the role of faculty, issues of a distinctive curriculum, academic freedom, and the role of the Catholic university in American culture. The series involved a large number of the faculty in an exploration of the mission and identity of the Catholic university and a consideration of its implications for their own teaching and scholarship in particular disciplines. A facilitator of one of the early summer seminars, Janine Langan (1995) from St. Michael's College of the University of Toronto, observed that

The seminar...was one of the most positive experiences in Church I have known....The project in Catholic education in process on this campus is impressive in its openness, thoroughness, and patience. I doubt such consensus building is occurring anywhere on such a scale. (p. 1)

Similarly, Brian Daley (1994) commented on his experience at the first of these seminars, focusing on the idea of the Catholic university:

The seminar group was as varied in interest and expertise, in Church membership, in age and length of service at the university, in overriding concerns and convictions—as one might imagine in any American academic institution; yet it was a group constantly characterized by graciousness, energy, patience, mutual respect, and a serious focus on the issues our discussion raised—a model, really, of civil and informed interdisciplinary exchange at its best. (p. 2)

The conversations continued to be both wide ranging and vital and were in large measure made possible by a new kind of university forum provided by Catholic Studies that had begun to draw into being a community of scholars committed to extending this great conversation. Both in preparation for the seminars, and later in the course of them, a number of faculty began to focus on existing obstacles to the achievement of a distinctive Catholic identity on our campus. Acknowledging a consistent Catholic emphasis on the unity of knowledge and the ultimate complementarity of faith and reason and equally aware of John Paul II's insistence on the fact that a Catholic university was paradoxically committed both to an ongoing reflection on the truth it has received in the *Logos* and an open search for truth, we recognized that these fundamental claims were rarely explicit in the intellectual life of our campus. At the same time we realized that we had considerable strengths on which to build. As a diocesan university we had retained a sense of ecclesial identity

and had, as a result, consistently sought to articulate our self-understanding in explicitly Catholic terms rather than in that of the charism of a founding religious community. We had retained strong and coherent departments of theology and philosophy with unusually large general requirements (12 credits in theology, 8 in philosophy). We had a president both committed to and articulate about our Catholic identity, and had on campus both a college and a major seminary. The university had vibrant professional and pre-professional programs that had sustained connections with the university's commitment to liberal learning and Catholic mission.

At the same time, we were aware that we confronted a number of challenges in attempting to renew our Catholic identity, including the fragmentation of knowledge, in one sense an inevitable result of the proliferation of information in modern culture; the decline in religious literacy among students; the increasing specialization of disciplinary claims and of faculty training; hiring and promotion structures which rewarded that specialization and increasingly deemphasized the value of general knowledge and interdisciplinary studies; the increasing privatization of faith in modern culture and the dissociation of sensibility between the hard sciences and what were increasingly seen to be mere emotive religious claims; and the standardization of university life, partly reflecting an instrumentalization of the university itself and partly the recognition that students increasingly tended to view their university studies merely in terms of career preparation.

An Interdisciplinary Approach

These conversations eventually led to a proposal to create a new interdisciplinary program that would encourage interested students to explore more systematically the complex intellectual tradition of the Catholic faith and to consider its expression within a variety of historical periods and cultural contexts. We were guided by a number of classical and contemporary accounts of this distinctive philosophy of education. Drawing upon the strengths of faculty from a range of departments, including theology, philosophy, English, history, psychology, the natural sciences, and business, we eventually proposed both a major and minor in Catholic Studies to the faculty senate in the fall of 1992 and offered our first courses in the fall of 1993.

Although we focused on the minor field, assuming that the relatively large number of university general education requirements would discourage students from pursuing the major, we did develop a major field with an expectation for a double major in a second discipline. In the spring of 1995 we graduated 2 majors; in the spring of 2008, 74 students graduated in Catholic Studies with double majors in over 25 fields of study, 16 of whom had attained

summa cum laude honors. The rapid growth in the program initially surprised us, but we soon came to recognize that we were encountering a new generation both of young Catholics and of other students interested in exploring Catholic thought and culture. Here I am reminded of Dante's (1909) insistence in the *Convivio* of the importance for adolescents of that awe or

bewilderment of the mind at seeing or hearing great and wonderful things, or feeling them in some way. These, in so far as they are great, make him who feels them reverent towards them: in so far as they appear wonderful, they make him who feels them desirous of knowing them. (p. 281)

Alasdair MacIntyre (2001) has more recently made the same point in arguing that the integrative task of education is essential to a state of wonder, or what he called the need to be "constantly surprised, astonished, and perplexed" (p. 2). This desire for a deeper exploration of Catholic thought led to a strong preference for the major. From the beginning of the program more than 80% of our students have chosen the major rather than the minor field concentration.

The development of the Catholic Studies program on our campus inevitably raised a number of concerns. Would the interdisciplinary program not inevitably tend to diminish the distinctive roles of theology and philosophy in the general curriculum and in the life of the university at large? Would Catholic Studies not tend to marginalize the presence of Catholic thought on campus and thus absolve the university as a whole of its obligation to express its Catholic identity in all of its disciplines and programs? In fact, did we not run the risk of repeating the nineteenth-century pattern of marginalizing the study of religion to intellectually and geographically isolated schools of divinity? In contrast we argued that the interdisciplinary study of Catholicism on campus would enhance rather than undermine the roles of theology and philosophy and that Catholic Studies would in this sense act as a catalyst on campus for the renewal of Catholic life and thought on our campus. Of course, from the beginning the Catholic Studies project at St. Thomas focused on an engagement with the university as a whole in its emphasis on the double major, on courses linking Catholic thought to specific disciplines and professions, as well as its continuing commitment to faculty development and to university-wide lectures and programs. We not only continued but expanded our summer faculty seminars with a new series focusing on particular topics ranging from the relations of science and theology, the Catholic novel, the Church and baroque art in Rome, management education in a Catholic university, to the Church's relations to the Third Reich. In addition, with

the support of a number of deans, we developed a series of seminars on the Catholic intellectual tradition for faculty in specific schools and colleges of the university.

The Center for Catholic Studies

In the spring of 1996, the university created the Center for Catholic Studies in order to coordinate the work of the interdisciplinary program, various lecture series, and faculty development seminars and to develop new initiatives designed to enhance opportunities for the interdisciplinary study of Catholicism on campus. That same year the first of the Center's two research institutes, the John A. Ryan Institute for Catholic Social Thought, focusing on the relationship between the Catholic social tradition and business theory and practice, was created. The university has long had both vibrant undergraduate programs in business and one of the country's largest Master of Business Administration (MBA) programs. It was within this context that the Institute developed four major priorities for its work:

1. **Research:** The Institute sponsors seminars, conferences, and publications including international conferences and seminars in the United States, Mexico, India, Belgium, Spain, and the Vatican. Many of these conferences have been co-sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the International Association of Jesuit Business Schools. The Institute has published eight books and dozens of articles on the relationship between Catholic Social Thought and business.
2. **Faculty Development:** The Institute has worked with the dean of the college of business to create the Mission Driven Business Education Seminar based on the model of the Aspen great books seminars. It developed a series of faculty dinner conversations and seminars on special topics primarily for business faculty.
3. **Curriculum Development:** The Institute developed a series of undergraduate team taught courses on Christian faith and the professions. One of these courses focuses on management education and received the National Outstanding Course Award from the United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship in 2002. In addition, the Institute also contributed to the development of the business ethics requirement and the reflective manager course for the evening MBA program. The Institute coordinated a conference at Notre Dame in June of this year (2008) on business education at the Catholic university.
4. **Outreach to Practitioners:** The Institute developed the "Faith and Work Breakfast Series" at St. Olaf, an urban parish in Minneapolis, in which a

number of local and national speakers have reflected upon the relation of faith and work in American culture. The series is now in its 13th year with over 100 participants for each of the six sessions each year. The Institute also worked to implement the "Seeing Things Whole Project" with its focus seminars, roundtables, and retreats.

In collaboration with the archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, we developed a number of workshops and seminars on Catholic identity and the role of Catholic Social Thought for Catholic high school teachers. These programs continued for several years and involved faculty from schools throughout the archdiocese. In addition, the Institute worked with high school faculty on new courses incorporating Catholic Social Thought into the curriculum. As well, at the request of the archdiocese, the Center developed "Enrichment in Catholicism," a series of lectures and discussions on the implications of the Second Vatican Council for lay ministry.

In 1997, in order to provide a national forum for the interdisciplinary study of Catholicism and culture, the Center launched its interdisciplinary quarterly, *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*. The journal is now available in both print and online versions.

In 1998, Catholic Studies announced an affiliated program with the Angelicum, which allowed Catholic Studies students to spend a semester or full year of study in Rome. In 1999, the university acquired a 20,000-square-foot residence on the Tiber to house students, a Catholic Studies faculty member, and the residence directors. The program allows our students to pursue studies at the Angelicum, to deepen their appreciation of the global reality of Catholicism, and to enrich their sense of Catholicism's pursuit of beauty in art, liturgy, and architecture in Rome. The program offers an integrated academic and spiritual formation with a commitment to service in the city, most frequently with the St. Egidio Movement or the Missionaries of Charity. There is a chaplain for the program, retreats, and program study tours as well as on-site learning opportunities in the city.

In 2000, we developed the master's program in Catholic Studies, the only graduate program of its kind in the country. The following year we announced a joint degree with the School of Law. We found quickly that the graduate program tended to draw three distinct but complementary audiences. The first, a significant number of traditional-aged recent graduates who sought a deep interdisciplinary foundation in Catholic thought before going on to doctoral studies in a particular discipline or to professional studies in medicine, law, education, or business. Second, a considerable number of midcareer professionals who, having a deep sense of the imbalance of their

specialized professional training and their very basic intellectual formation in faith, were drawn to an academic study of Catholicism. Finally, we found that a number of teachers, administrators, and lay ministers were eager to pursue such an interdisciplinary study of Catholicism rather than more focused courses in ministry formation. The program now enrolls 90 students from around the country and has attracted international students from Japan, the Philippines, and Romania. We are now exploring a variety of distance learning opportunities.

By 2000 we had begun to realize that the increasingly complex programs of Catholic Studies could not be sustained without new institutional structures to support them. It had become apparent, for example, that the academic programs could not continue to develop and expand if faculty were able to pursue their interdisciplinary teaching and research only when released from their primary appointment in a specific discipline. This led us to seek a change from the status of a program to that of a department, a change that was approved in 2001. There is now a core faculty whose principal work in the university is within Catholic Studies. In addition, however, there are primary, secondary, and adjunct appointments in Catholic Studies, which allow a number of faculty to continue to teach in another department. That same year we launched our semiannual magazine, *Perspectives*, which provides an overview of the activities of all of the Center's programs.

Contributions Campus-Wide

In 2002, the Center coordinated the university's application to the Lilly Endowment to support "From Career to Calling," a program to promote the theological exploration of vocation. Although we created a wide number of programs across the campus, Lilly funding enabled the Center to move forward with a number of new initiatives designed to promote vocational discernment. Included among them was an expansion of the faith and professions courses; grants for new course development and research projects; a new Latino leadership program; the "Leadership Interns Program," which identifies talented junior and senior students already in leadership positions on campus and provides more intensive leadership formation for the Church and civil society; the "Aquinas Fellows Program," which honors undergraduate students of unusual distinction in each of the three areas of vocational discernment identified by the Lilly Endowment; residential living communities for men and women and designated floors in residence halls; service learning and retreat opportunities; internships and opportunities to learn about men's and women's religious communities; lay vocations; and diocesan priesthood.

That same year we began the renovation of Sitzmann Hall in order to accommodate the expansion of the Center's programs. With a major gift from the Sitzmann family we were able to complete the renovation in January of 2003 and move into the building now containing 14 offices, a chapel, classroom, student common room, computer lab, conference and meeting rooms, and full kitchen. This year we announced plans for an addition that will double the size of our current space in order to accommodate all of the Center's programs. We plan to break ground for that addition in spring 2009. With the addition we will add a larger chapel, a new classroom, offices, a graduate student center and an elevator which will, for the first time, make the building fully accessible.

In 2005, we announced the creation of the Terrence J. Murphy Institute for Catholic Thought, Law and Public Policy, a joint venture of the Center for Catholic Studies and the School of Law. The Institute's activities focus on four areas: developing curricular resources for Catholic law schools; facilitating research and scholarly discussions concerning law and the Catholic intellectual tradition; engaging and serving the community through public events; and nonpartisan public policy analysis rooted in the Catholic tradition. The institute has sponsored a number of local and national symposia in order to fulfill this larger mission. That same year we developed a new program on the Catholic-Orthodox dialogue, bringing to campus a range of speakers and cultural events to highlight the importance of mutual understanding between Eastern and Western Churches.

In 2007 we developed two new lecture/seminar series, the first focusing on the Church and the biomedical revolution, the second on the importance of Hispanic culture for the Church in the United States.

Institute for Catholic Leadership

In recent years, many of the Center's principal programs have been developed with the support of funding from the Lilly Endowment's program on the theological exploration of vocation. We had committed to sustaining the most successful of these programs and to expanding and developing new programs that emerged from it. This has led us to propose a new Institute for Catholic Leadership in order to respond to the current crisis of leadership in the Church and in civil society. This crisis strikes us as at once both grave and hopeful, grave in that it calls for a decisive response in the face of serious need; hopeful in that much can be accomplished as a new generation rises to the challenges before them. The Institute will include a set of six programs that integrate intellectual and spiritual formation with residential living and career preparation. They include:

1. The Leadership Interns Program
2. Catholic Studies Community Living: Men's and Women's Houses and Residence Hall floors
3. Professional Leadership Formation
4. The Latino Leadership Program
5. Catholic Studies Scholars Program
6. Post-doctoral Fellows Program

The Institute will focus primarily on the formation of undergraduate students. To accomplish this work, the Institute will unite several existing Catholic Studies leadership initiatives with a number of new programs. In addition to assisting the formation of many young Catholic leaders, the Institute also intends to become a place of thoughtful analysis concerning what it means to be a Catholic leader in the Church and in civil society through publications, conferences, and scholarship in residence programs so that its work can extend beyond our own campus.

A Coherent Vision

Several years ago Tom Landy (2000) noted that

while a Catholic Studies model is undoubtedly not the only way to develop an institution's Catholic identity, it can serve as an important means for developing Catholic identity within the academic program....As David O'Brien has noted repeatedly, Catholic Studies programs increase the likelihood that Catholic colleges and universities can be places where the church can do its thinking and engage its own and other traditions. The next several years should prove a fruitful time for testing that possibility. (p. 225)

At St. Thomas, Catholic Studies has proven to be a remarkably vital academic project, one with wide and deep interest among students from varied intellectual backgrounds and career interests, with broad outreach to the local community in lectures, workshops, and symposia, with comprehensive faculty development programs and seminars providing forums for a sustained exploration of the implications of the Catholic intellectual tradition, with research projects and symposia, with a national quarterly journal exploring Catholic thought and culture, with international programs and study abroad opportunities, with student life, with residential and leadership formation programs, with collaborative programs with schools and colleges of the university, including joint degree programs, with partnership programs with the

local Church, with endowed lecture and visiting scholar programs, and with sustained engagement with professional and pre-professional programs both on and off campus. In this work, Catholic Studies at St. Thomas, as David O'Brien had predicted, has in significant ways served as a catalyst on campus for the renewal of the university's identity and mission. In doing so it has assisted the university in the task identified in the Land O'Lakes Statement of making Catholicism perceptibly present and effectively operative on our campus. The complexity and diversity of our institutions will increasingly require these kinds of interdisciplinary Catholic programs if we are to sustain a coherent vision of Catholic thought and culture for the wider university and for the broader culture.

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